

Lord, Teach Us to Pray – Part 3

Choose to Be – Romans 12:12

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – May 8th, 2022

Intro:

- The message this morning relates to moms and all of life. We will focus on one short verse, and it is easy to memorize and provides hope and help for all of us.
- The verse is straightforward:

Rom 12:12

Be joyful in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer.

- This verse packs a punch. So much wisdom packed into so few words. Be joyful in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer. These characteristics will get you through anything. These choices will lead you home. These qualities will always serve you well regardless of the situation or circumstances. These are qualities of Christ, and these are qualities of Christians who are connected to Christ because His life is flowing through us. These characteristics do not come to us naturally; all of them take the work of Christ in our life.
- Your life would be successful if people described you this way. If I asked people at your funeral to describe you and they answered, “She was joyful in hope, patient in affliction, persistent in prayer,” your life was a success. This is a person you want to be around. This is the person you want to be.
- So how can we be this person? Choice. By choosing to be connected to Christ and having His word in our hearts. Once His word is in our hearts, we aim to live like this by focusing on these things and transforming our minds to think and live like this.
- So let's focus on what these attributes are and how they can be true about us.

Be joyful in hope

- Being joyful in hope. Hope is powerful and profound. It is the difference between overcoming or going under. Hope is what gets prisoners through concentration camps, and hope is what gets athletes through rigorous workouts. Hope is what gets moms through tough days, and hope can bring us through anything, giving us strength.
- There is a verse that explains what gave Jesus the strength to endure.

Heb 12:2 ESV

Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross

- The joy that was set before him – this gave Him hope, and hope gave Him strength to endure. Hope can help get you through anything . . . and the greatest hope and strength come from what will be based upon the promise of God.

2 Cor 4:16-18 ESV

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory

beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

- God, grant us the eyes to see the unseen things and understand the eternal weight of glory.
What we receive partially and passing now, we will receive perfectly and permanently then. But now, we can still rejoice in the hope of what is to come.
- According to a book titled *How Ronald Reagan Changed My Life* by Peter Robinson (a former speech writer for Regan) one of Ronald Regan's favorite jokes concerns twin boys.

"Worried that the boys had developed extreme personalities — one was a total pessimist, the other a total optimist — their parents took them to a psychiatrist. First, the psychiatrist treated the pessimist. Trying to brighten his outlook, the psychiatrist took him to a room piled to the ceiling with brand-new toys. But instead of yelping with delight, the little boy burst into tears. "What's the matter?" the psychiatrist asked, baffled. "Don't you want to play with any of the toys?" "Yes," the little boy bawled, "but if I did I'd only break them."

Next, the psychiatrist treated the optimist. Trying to dampen his outlook, the psychiatrist took him to a room piled to the ceiling with horse manure. But instead of wrinkling his nose in disgust, the optimist emitted just the yelp of delight the psychiatrist had been hoping to hear from his brother, the pessimist. Then he clambered to the top of the pile, dropped to his knees, and began gleefully digging out scoop after scoop with his bare hands. "What do you think you're doing?" the psychiatrist asked, just as baffled by the optimist as he had been by the pessimist. "With all this manure," the little boy replied, beaming, "there must be a pony in here somewhere!"

"Reagan told the joke so often that it got to be kind of a joke with the rest of us. Whenever something would go wrong, somebody on the staff would be sure to say, 'There must be a pony in here somewhere.'"

Be patient in affliction

- Being patient in affliction is hard. So, what this verse tells us is that there will be affliction. This is a true fact of life. There will be afflictions from those common to most of us (traffic, taxes, storms and sickness) to those that are specific to some of us (persecutions, pressures, cancers, and calluses). The only people I know who like the word patients are doctors. I have a hard time with it, because I have things to do and people to see, and I like checking off as many things as I can as fast as I can. When people or things slow me down, I have a hard time being patient.
- Being a parent requires patience, from reading to tying shoes to getting out the door. For a long time I suffered from the "I can't wait until" disease or dis-ease. Looking back, I wish I would have been more present in the moment and have learned at that time, that the journey is the destination. God is a God of process. He could have made everything with one word, but He did so in stages, in days. Process is important, and affliction is also a process that God uses to shape us into His image. Sometimes, it takes time. I cook with a microwave, and if it takes 5 minutes, it is too long. But the best meals take time, and the best lives take time and a process that takes patience.

James 5:7-8 ESV

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

- Good things take time, and God things take time. Your character and our new world is shaped in time. God takes His time, and we need to allow this time to change us. We must be patient, we have to ask God for patience and trust that He is doing His work in us and through us.
- Being patient in affliction is our state of mind while we are holding on to hope, trusting God is working in us and on us. Know that your destination is secure and that God is working all things together for good.

Be persistent in prayer

- Hopefully, you have taken me up in praying Luke 11. Persistent means that we continue to pray, and this is our expression of hope, knowing that we pray because we have faith and hope in the one who can change all things. This is not just a one-time prayer but prayer that continues to press forward. This means to busy oneself with, be devoted to, hold fast to or persevere in prayer.
- We pray because God listens. We pray because God cares. We pray because God is active in the world. We pray because we have faith. We persist because we love and we have faith.

Luke 18:1-8 ESV

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. 3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ 4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’” 6 And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. 7 And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? 8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

- So, whenever you face something, pray. When we start the day and all during the day and when we go to bed. Prayer changes us, and prayer changes people and circumstances. Pray with “shameless audacity,” pray continually, and pray in all circumstances. Prayer is evidence that we have faith, and through the faithfulness of prayer, change happens.

Conclusion

- Be joyful in hope, be patient in affliction, and be faithful in prayer. Let this be the testimony of your life. Let this be the testimony of this congregation.
- Prayer people and pray